

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 267793

21

ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

666

DRAFTED BY:EUR:WE:EMROWELL

APPROVED BY:EUR:WE:EDWARD M. ROWELL

EUR:WE:MR. WARHOL

EUR:RPM:MR. HAUS (INFORMED)

EUR:MR. EWING

S/S-O:DLMACK

----- 100891

R 120640Z NOV 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

S E C R E T STATE 267793

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM LONDON DATED NOVEMBER 7, 1975
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO NATO, USNMR SHAPE, USCINCEUR,
PARIS, ROME, MOSCOW, MBFR VIENNA, BONN, SECDEF IS REPEATED
TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T LONDON 17134

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, MFR, UK, EC, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR AND THE BRITISH

REF: BONN 18051

1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION. FOR DIVERSE REASONS,
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, HMG IS INCREASINGLY SCEPTICAL
THAT THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WILL NECESSARILY REDOUND TO
THE BENEFIT OF THE ALLIANCE. THIS INTENSIFIED
SCEPTICISM HAS INCREASED UK CONCERN OVER, AND ACTIVITY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 267793

IN, ALLIANCE DEBATES ON OPTION III, PRODUCED FREQUENT

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF REDEFINED U.S. GOALS IN MBFR, AND MOVED THE BRITISH NEARER THE FRG IN CLOSELY QUESTIONING THE EUROPEAN IMPLICATIONS OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT, AND ESPECIALLY ONE CONTAINING A PHASE II.

2. BACKGROUND. ADDRESSEES WILL REMEMBER THAT THE HEATH GOVERNMENT ENTERED THE MBFR EXERCISE IN 1973 WITH SERIOUS RESERVATIONS. HEATH, WHO HAD BECOME SOMETHING OF A GAULLIST, SWALLOWED WHOLE WELL-KNOWN FRENCH ARGUMENTS AGAINST SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE WARSAW PACT, BUT FINALLY WENT ALONG RELUCTANTLY WITH ALLIANCE DISCUSSIONS BECAUSE OF: (1) AN APPRECIATION OF MANSFIELD AMENDMENT PRESSURES IN THE U.S. AND THE NEED TO REDUCE THEM; (2) THE BELIEF THAT THE ALLIANCE MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY IN ARRIVING AT A COMMON NEGOTIATING POSITION; AND (3) THE HOPE THE SOVIETS WOULD REFUSE TO ENTER THE TALKS. WHEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1973 IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE U.S. MIGHT HAVE THE SOVIETS ON THE MBFR HOOK, THE BRITISH ATTEMPTED TO PUSH THE ALLIANCE TO AN ORIGINAL TOUGH AND UNCOMPROMISING POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE EAST WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE THAT THE TALKS WOULD SOON FOUNDER. THE UK ALSO RESISTED U.S. EFFORTS TO GAIN ALLIANCE AGREEMENT TO TABLE A DRAFT TREATY EARLY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. BY THE EARLY FALL OF 1973 MBFR HAD BECOME A MAJOR IRRITANT IN U.S.-UK RELATIONS, RELATIONS WHICH FURTHER COOLED AT THE TIME OF THE OCTOBER WAR. BUT AS A RESULT OF HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS, DURING THE FALL THE UK GAVE IN AND WENT ALONG WITH THE U.S. INITIATIVE AT NATO AND LATER IN VIENNA. WE GATHERED AT THAT TIME THAT BRITAIN HAD DECIDED NOT TO OPPOSE MOVEMENT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT INSTEAD TO ASK THE TOUGHEST KINDS OF QUESTIONS DURING ALLIANCE CONSULTATIONS IN ORDER TO ENSURE SATISFACTORY RESULTS FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, AND TO PREVENT -- AND HERE HEATH WAS OBVIOUSLY BORROWING FROM ACROSS THE CHANNEL -- REDUCED FLEXIBILITY FOR EVENTUAL EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 267793

4. IN MARCH OF 1974, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT TOOK POWER AND INITIATED STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE U.S.-UK RELATIONS. THE SAME PERIOD SAW THE BEGINNING OF THE UK DEFENSE REVIEW AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MBFR BEGAN TO LOOK ATTRACTIVE AS A TOOL TO REDUCE BRITISH DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. THUS, IN THAT SPRING, HMG INDICATED THAT IT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN TAKING REDUCTIONS IN PHASE II, AND EVEN PERHAPS, THROUGH

CONFLATION, IN PHASE I.

5. IN MID-74 CAME THE INTERNAL U.S. DEBATE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF OPTION III INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS. HMG WAS WELL INFORMED THAT INTER-AGENCY DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON WERE CONSIDERING OPTIONS SUCH AS SCALEBACKS, "QUICK AND DIRTY," U.S./SOVIET CUTS, AND ABANDONMENT OF THE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT. THE BRITISH WERE RELIEVED WHEN NONE OF THESE SPROUTED, BUT HAVE NOT FOR-

GOTTEN THEY WERE ONCE IN THE GARDEN.

6. CURRENT SITUATION. THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT NEW ELEMENT IN HME'S VIEW OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND ONE WHICH WILL INCREASINGLY INFLUENCE UK MBFR POSITIONS IN ALLIANCE DEBATES, FLOWS FROM BRITAIN'S DECISION IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR TO REMAIN IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. HEATH'S CONCERN IN 1973 THAT MBFR NOT REDUCE EUROPEAN FLEXIBILITY IN REACHING INCREASED DEFENSE COOPERATION WAS -- THROUGH THE EC REFERENDUM HERE -- INSTITUTIONALIZED AT ALL LEVELS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. HAVING FIRMLY FACED ITS FUTURE TOWARD EUROPE, THE UK HAS NOTICEABLY AND INCREASINGLY, THROUGH THE SUMMER AND FALL OF 1975 CONSIDERED NOT ONLY HOW AN MBFR AGREEMENT WOULD AFFECT ALLIANCE DEFENSE, BUT, AND OF ALMOST EQUAL IMPORTANCE, HOW IT WOULD INFLUENCE THE COMMUNITY'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVENTUAL ABILITY -- LARGELY AS YET UNDEFINED -- TO UNITE AND DEFEND ITSELF.

7. THIS LATTER CONCERN FINDS ITS EXPRESSION IN BOTH THE UK'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GENERAL TEXTURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND IN BRITISH POSITIONS ON SPECIFIC, AND SOMETIMES, QUITE TECHNICAL MBFR ISSUES. WE SENSE THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 267793

THE HMG INCREASINGLY SEES MBFR -- IN ITS PRESENT PARAMETERS -- AS A POLITICAL AND NOT AS A MILITARY NEGOTIATION. BOTH BECAUSE OF THE RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBERS OF SOVIET FORCES BEING DISCUSSED, AND BECAUSE OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY OF THE USSR, THE BRITISH -- AND THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE AT THE WORKING LEVEL IN THE FCO -- PERSONALLY AND QUIETLY TEND TO MINIMIZE THE MILITARY BENEFITS OF A STAGE I AGREEMENT WITHIN THE LIMITS NOW BEING CONSIDERED. THUS, THEY INCREASINGLY VIEW THE MAJOR ISSUE OF MBFR NOT AS THE PROBABILITY OF A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN WARSAW PACT CAPABILITY IN THE NGA, BUT AS A METHOD BY WHICH THE SOVIETS MIGHT, THROUGH CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH NATO, ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO INTERFERE WITH, INDEED SIGNIFICANTLY SLOW, EVENTUAL EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION. A WORST CASE

BRITISH SCENARIO MIGHT FORESEE IN THE LATE 1970'S OR 1980'S A REDUCED U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN, AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO, WESTERN EUROPE, DIMINISHING DEFENSE CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE PART OF THE NETHERLANDS, DENMARK AND NORWAY, AND AN MBFR ACCORD WHICH WOULD PREVENT THE REMAINING "STOUT" EUROPEANS FROM EFFECTIVELY FILLING THE RESULTANT GAP. THEREFORE, THE BRITISH SHARE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S PREOCCUPATION WITH AVOIDING LIMITATIONS ON NON-U.S. ALLIED EQUIPMENT AND ON REFUSING ANY SOVIET DEMAND FOR NATIONAL FORCE SUB-CEILINGS.

8. THIS SPECIFIC AND SHARED UK-FRG PREOCCUPATION, BALANCED BY THE WILSON GOVERNMENT'S WISH TO MAINTAIN STRONG AND CLOSE LINKS WITH THE U.S., PRODUCES THE AMBIVALENCE IN UK ATTITUDES TOWARD EC DISCUSSIONS NOTED IN EMBASSY BONN'S REFTEL. TO PUT IT CRUDELY, WE BELIEVE THE BRITISH WOULD NOT WANT THE EC MBFR DISCUSSIONS TO HINDER NATO CONSULTATIONS NOR TO DAMAGE THE UK-U.S. TIE, AND WOULD RESIST SUCH DIVISIVE EVOLUTION. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY WOULD NOT MIND IF THOSE COMMUNITY TALKS DID DEVELOP IN A WAY WHICH WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE FRG TO RESIST U.S. PRESSURES OR, AS EMBASSY BONN OBSERVED, TO "SLAM DOOR" ON LIMITATIONS OR REDUCTIONS ON NON-U.S. ALLIED EQUIPMENT. THUS, THEY HAVE REMAINED QUIET AT RECENT EC MBFR DISCUSSIONS, AND HAVE NOT OPPOSED THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 267793

GERMAN INITIATIVE FOR FURTHER EC MBFR STUDIES.

9. A WORD ABOUT THE COMMON CEILING. AS READERS KNOW, THE BRITISH HAVE TRIED THROUGH THE PAST MONTHS TO OBTAIN NATO CONSENSUS ON A NUMERICAL DEFINITION OF THE COMMON CEILING, AND TO REQUIRE -- AS AN INFLEXIBLE ALLIED NEGOTIATING GOAL -- WARSAW PACT AGREEMENT TO A FIGURE DURING PHASE I. WE WOULD GUESS THAT THE BRITISH CONCUR IN-HOUSE WITH THE U.S. POSITION THAT SUCH A REQUIREMENT IS NON-NEGOTIABLE WITH THE OTHER SIDE. BUT WE BELIEVE THE HEART OF THEIR CONCERN IS NOT WITH THE OTHER SIDE, BUT WITH THE EVOLUTION OF THE ALLIANCE NEGOTIATING POSITION. WE THINK THEY SEEM WEAK AND THIS ANXIETY

REFLECTS ITSELF ONLY IN THE MOST SHADOWY ALLUSIONS -- THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT EVENTUALLY FALL OFF THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMON CEILING, A CONCEPT THE UK MAY DOUBT WILL EVER BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE SOVIETS. IN THAT EVENT, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF AN OPTION IV, V, OR VI, THE BRITISH COULD PROJECT AN EVENTUALITY IN WHICH NATO, AND BY EXTENSION THE EUROPEANS, DID NOT REACH A COMMON CEILING WITH THE EAST, BUT DID GIVE UP EUROPEAN DEFENSE

FLEXIBILITY AND DID HAND THE SOVIETS THE CHESTNUTISH
"DROIT DE REGARD".

10. NONE OF THIS MEANS THAT THE BRITISH HAVE ABANDONED
HOPE OF REALIXING CURRENT ALLIANCE MBFR NEGOTIATING
GOALS. WE BELIEVE THEY ARE PRESENTLY MAKING, AND WILL
CONTINUE TO MAKE, EVERY HONEST EFFORT TO REACH THOSE
GOALS. MOREOVER, THE WILSON GOVERNMENT'S ALL EMBRACING
COMMITMENT TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. SHOULD PREVENT
THIS ISSUE FROM BECOMING ANY TIME SOON AN IRRITANT
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. NEVERTHELESS, WE WOULD
EXPECT THAT THE CURRENT TIGHT QUESTIONING AND AGGRESSIVE
ROLE BY THE UK AT NATO WILL CONTINUE. AND, TO ECHO
EMBASSY BONN'S JUDGEMENT ABOUT THE FRG, THE BRITISH WILL
BE MOST SENSITIVE TO ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE UNITED
STATES MAY BE CONSIDERING A NEW MBFR INITIATIVE WHICH
THEY WOULD REGARD AS MORTGAGING THE FUTURE REQUIREMENTS
OF A COMMON EUROPEAN DEFENSE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 267793

RICHARDSON UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE267793
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR:WE:EMROWELL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750393-0568
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751153/aaaabvbwg.tel
Line Count: 249
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 BONN 18051
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <15 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR AND THE BRITISH
TAGS: PARM, GE, UK, NATO, EEC, MBFR
To: MADRID
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006